

Colchester Community and Economic Development Advisory Council (CEDAC) Minutes March 18, 2010

Members Attending: David Usher, Chair, Nanci Glindmyer, Vice-Chair, Bill Peters, Deborah Winters, Mike Mazza, James Ehlers, Joe Egan, Absent: Paul Olsen, J. Churchill Hindes. Others: Kimberly Murray, Tom Mulcahy, Bob Qua, B.A.S.S.

The minutes from February 18th were approved. Motion made by Joe, seconded by Nanci. Dave noted the new Community and Economic Development Office website is up that Kimberly created at www.colchestervt.gov and that everyone should take a look. Kimberly mentioned it is a work in progress but some of the basic pages are available. More will be done once the TIF Application has been submitted.

Community Visioning Process, Tom Mulcahy, Planning Commission Chair

Tom is prepared to implement the recommendation of the Evergreen Study to lead the Town in the creation of a vision and long range objectives for the Town. He has researched an approach to use and he plans to meet with the Select Board to discuss it and came to discuss it with CEDAC. This visioning process and strategy may take two years to accomplish. Tom discussed the Legacy Project in Burlington and that he, Al Voegelé, and Sarah Hadd had met with former Mayor Peter Clavelle to discuss. Some of the work is still continuing with a “Town Meeting” coming up soon. Tom noted it is a large undertaking and Burlington’s work includes full time employees working on it. He is calling this work the Colchester Heritage Project and Al, Sarah, and Tom are working on a process to develop a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to hire a facilitator to facilitate this visioning process.

Tom used a slide show to help define what they were currently thinking. This Sustainable Vision needs to be sustainable, credible and realistic, attractive and unique, affordable and achievable, look to the future and be an ongoing event. The Vision needs to be ambitious, appropriate, set standards, reflect high ideals, clarifies our purpose, inspire enthusiasm, and be easy to understand. The Vision must attract commitment, create meaning in people’s lives, establish a standard of excellence, and bridge the present with the future.

The Project Goals include developing and implementing a plan for creating and valuing a community vision, developing and implementing a comprehensible and sustainable strategic plan, and high level timing of goals. Tom explained the timeline they have set out and potential costs and listed potential benefits. He seemed not worried about finding the funds to do this in a range from \$20,000 - \$100,000. www.susset.org is an example of a type of similar process.

The West Lakeshore Drive Study came up and it was discussed how the Town has not been able to implement any of the recommendations mostly due to Select Board resistance. Tom also mentioned land as a limited resource here in Colchester particularly since we currently cannot build on agricultural land. Nanci asked how will this study be any different and not go on the shelf. Tom said this is a very important issue and it will be frankly discussed with the Select Board. Kimberly agreed and noted this issue is critical to this project’s success. Bill said he has lived over in Europe and cautioned Tom on modeling their processes (susset.org) as municipalities over there are very difficult to work with, this may not be easy to transfer to our organization.

Dave noted that this process will also only succeed if a group of folks are willing to carry it forward and it holds a “fire in their bellies” to champion it. All the Town Boards and groups will come together with this facilitator. Is there a common value set in the community and a core group to carry it forward?

The CEDAC applauded Tom for heading up this initiative and using his expertise to assist the Town. They are happy to assist in any way they can.

B.A.S.S. Eastern Region Divisional Tournament 2011, Bob Qua

Bob Qua came to speak to the group about the Tournament moving from Plattsburgh to Colchester for September 2011 and would the Town and business community be supportive of hosting it. This is an amateur tournament that has been in Plattsburg the last ten years. Originally, the State Fish and Wildlife Dept. fully funded the Professional Tournament back in 1997 and 1999 and then stopped. The tournaments have been privately funded since. It takes about \$20,000 in merchandize and “economic support” to have it be successfully hosted. This Tournament would bring in 130 participants and over 80 boats to Malletts Bay and would be around for a week with the practice time and actual Tournament time. Over the course of the year 2009, Plattsburgh estimates \$8.5 million in direct and indirect revenues into the local economy from several of these Tournaments. Bob is looking to see if there is enough business and town support to host the event. Colchester is the only town on the Vermont side of the Lake that has all the amenities these bass anglers need.

The CEDAC is very excited about the opportunity and would like to talk to the Parks and Recreation Dept. about their willingness to be involved at all. Ideas included hosting a dinner for the participants. It might be helpful to gather from the Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce a list of Colchester businesses. The group suggested a letter to Al Voegelé be prepared explaining the Tournament and expressing our support and include a draft Proclamation for the Select Board’s to sign supporting this important tourism based economic generator to Colchester and welcoming the participants and their families.

Other Business:

Kimberly mentioned the Select Board is having a meeting in April to discuss what happened on Town Meeting Day voting where the school budget failed, the reauthorization of the Capital Transportation Plan failed, and the Town budget just narrowly passed. They would like to hear from businesses and business leaders including CEDAC. Kimberly will forward the email invitation.

Kimberly is working on preparing the Tax Increment Finance District Application for the Town and it needs to be completed by April 22nd for the public comment period and adoption to be ready for the VT Economic Progress Council meeting in June. This is a very tight timeframe.

For April’s agenda we will review whose terms are up in June, funding for small CEDAC projects like the Water based Recreation Sub-Committee and finalize support letter for B.A.S.S. and any other business.

The next meeting will be April 15, 2010.

Respectfully submitted by,
Kimberly L. Murray, AICP